

**REMARKS**

In the above-identified Office Action, the Examiner has objected to claims 1-7 because of the use of the word "coin-type". Applicant has amended the claims so that the term "coin-type" has been replaced with the term "coin-shaped".

Claims 1 and 7-8 has been rejected as being unpatentable by Yonezawa et al. Applicant has canceled claim 1 and amended claims 7 and 8 so that they now depend from claim 2, thereby obviating this rejection.

Further, claims 2-4 and 9 have been rejected as obvious over Yonezawa et al. in view of Nishiumi et al.

The Examiner has stated that Nishiumi et al. discloses a shaft (28) turnably supported at one end of the coin-shaped IC card guide path. However, the shaft (28) of Nishiumi et al. does not have a partition plate secured to a leading end surface of the shaft, for opening and closing an upstream end of the another coin-shaped IC card guide. Claim 2 which is the combination of now canceled claim 1 and claim 2, includes the partition plate as one of the indispensable features of the subject invention.

Due to the lack of the partition plate in any of the cited art, including Nishiumi et al., we believe that the amended claim 2 is unobvious over the combination of Yonezawa et al. and Nishiumi et al.

As stated by the Examiner, Nishiumi et al. discloses a distributing lever (58). However, this distributing lever (58) is not formed with a gap into which the coin-shaped IC card can be inserted and thus does not make claim 3 as amended (to include claim 1) obvious.

Concerning claim 4, the Examiner also states that Nishiumi et al. discloses a pair of guide belts forming a gap for inserting the coin-shaped IC card therebetween. However, the guide belts of Nishiumi et al. are not an IC card distributing means. In addition, it would not have been obvious to provide such a wall that temporarily stops a coin-shaped IC card passing through the interior of the coin-shaped IC card guide path when the coin-shaped IC card is inserted through the gap of the distributing lever as recited in claim 3.

Serial No. 09/894,415


Insofar as claim 4 depends from claims 3 and claim 5 depends from claim 4, and claim 3 is patentable as set forth above, claims 4 and 5 should be patentable as well.

Similarly, claim 6 is dependent from claim 2 (as amended) and claim 9 is dependent from claim 7, which in turn is dependent from claim 2. Thus, claim 2 being patentable as set forth above, claims 6, 7 and 9 should be as well.

Applicant hereby requests reconsideration and re-examination thereof.

With the above amendments and the remarks, this application is considered ready for allowance, and Applicants earnestly solicit an early notice of same. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of the subject application, he is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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